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Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 ACDA-07 CIAE-00
INR-07 IO-13 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-05
DODE-00 SS-15 SP-02 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 /094 W
----------033903 100439Z /12
R 091753Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1324
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
ERDA WASHDC
ERDA GERMANTOWN

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USIAEA, USEEC
DEPT PASS NRC

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TECH, ENRG, GW
SUBJECT: REPORT ON WEST GERMAN FAST BREEDER PROGRAM

1. LOCAL NEWSPAPERS (BONN GENERAL-ANZEIGER AND HANDELSBLATT) ON SEPTEMBER 7 REPORTED THAT MINISTER FOR RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY HANS MATTHOEFER HAS SUBMITTED A 150-PAGE REPORT ON FRG FAST BREEDER PROGRAM TO BUNDESTAG BUDGET COMMITTEE AND TO RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE. EMBASSY IS CURRENTLY ATTEMPTING OBTAIN COPY OF THIS REPORT. FOLLOWING IS BASED ON PRESS ACCOUNTS OF CONTENTS OF REPORT.

2. MINISTER MATTHOEFER DEFENDS CONSTRUCTION OF FRG FAST BREEDER REACTOR SNR-300 AT KALKAR, NOTING THAT
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TERMINATING THE PROJECT NOW WOULD COST AS MUCH AS COMPLETING IT. REPORT GIVES COST OF TERMINATING SNR-300 PROJECT AS DM 960 MILLION. COST OF COMPLETING PROJECT WOULD BE DM L.5 BILLION OF WHICH DM 970 MILLION WOULD BE PUBLIC FUNDS. TOTAL PROJECT COST IS DM 2.6 BILLION. MATTHOEFER STATES THAT CONTINUATION OF THIS PROJECT WOULD NOT AUTOMATICALLY PRE-JUDGE CASE FOR OR

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AGAINST CONSTRUCTION OF SUBSEQUENT SNR-2 DEMONSTRATION BREEDER REACTOR, SINCE LATTER WOULD BE SEPARATE PROJECT AND WOULD REQUIRE SEPARATE PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL.

3. MATTHOEFER REPORT STATES THAT FAST BREEDER PROGRAM IS ESSENTIAL TO SECURING FRG ENERGY SUPPLIES, AND MINIMIZING FRG DEPENDENCE ON IMPORTED URANIUM. ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES, SUCH AS SOLAR ENERGY, ARE NOT REALISTIC ALTERNATIVES FOR FRG. NUCLEAR FUSION WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE AS A POWER SOURCE FOR AT LEAST FIFTY YEARS. SAFETY PROBLEMS WITH BREEDER REACTORS, ACCORDING TO REPORT, ARE NOT GREATER THAN WITH OTHER REACTOR TYPES.

4. MATTHOEFER STATES THAT BECAUSE THE FAST BREEDER REACTOR USES URANIUM MORE EFFICIENTLY, EVEN FRG DOMESTIC URANIUM RESERVES WOULD BE WORTH EXPLOITING.

5. TERMINATING THE SNR-300 PROJECT, ON THE OTHER HAND, WOULD:

--MAKE IT DIFFICULT OR IMPOSSIBLE TO RESTART AT LATER DATE;

--FORCE SEVERAL THOUSAND WORKERS JOBS TO BE
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TERMINATED;

--RESULT IN LOST KNOW-HOW, AND SCATTER SKILLED TEAMS.

6. FURTHER, WORK AT THE NUCLEAR RESEARCH CENTER IN KARLSRUHE WOULD BECOME VIRTUALLY POINTLESS. TERMINATING THESE PROJECTS WOULD REMOVE BASES FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN BREEDER DEVELOPMENT. (HE APPARENTLY WAS IMPLYING THAT BASES FOR FRG PARTICIPATION IN COOPERATION IN BREEDER TECHNOLOGY WOULD FALL BY THE WAYSIDE.) FINALLY, MATTHOEFER NOTED THAT THERE IS A PROMISING EXPORT MARKET FOR FAST BREEDERS AND THIS CANNOT BE SEPARATED FROM USE OF THIS TECHNOLOGY IN FRG ITSELF.

7. EMBASSY COMMENT: PRESS REPORTS MAY BE QUOTING SOMEWHAT OUT OF CONTEXT. HOWEVER, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE FRG BREEDER PROGRAM IS ENCOUNTERING UNFORESEEN POLITICAL, PUBLIC AND LEGAL OBSTACLES AND DELAYS WHICH COULD HAVE A SERIOUS IMPACT ON PROPOSED COM MERCIALIZATION OBJECTIVES.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Concepts: CONSTRUCTION, NUCLEAR ENERGY, NUCLEAR RESEARCH, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS)
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Sent Date: 09-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Subject: REPORT ON WEST GERMAN FAST BREEDER PROGRAM
TAGS: TECH, ENRG, GE
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